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FM AMCONSUL ADANA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4519
INFO RUEUITH/AFOSI DET 521 ANKARA TU
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 1065
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 0918
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUEILB/NCTC WASHINGTON DC
RHMFIUU/AFOSI DET 522 INCIRLIK AB TU
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ADANA 000069

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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY FOR MAY 09, 2007

¶1. This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for May 09, 2007. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL:

¶2. BOLGE / EKSPRES / SABAH (GUNEY): CHP Adana provincial party organization started first of its meetings concerning the election agenda together with the district chairmen of the party. MHP Adana Provincial Chairperson Yilmaz Tankut resigned from his office which is a required action for candidates working at public offices, to run in the upcoming election. Former Provincial Director of Environmental Issues also resigned from her office to run in the next election period for CHP. Mete Aslan, District Mayor of Iskenderun in Hatay, is reported as giving up the idea of declaring candidacy because the people of Iskenderun reportedly did not want him to resign. The dailies cite some other names resigning from offices: some doctors working at several state hospitals of Adana, some professors working at Cukurova University, an AKP executive board member, a member of provincial administration, chairperson of MUSIAD's (Independent Businessmen Association) Adana chapter, etc.

¶3. SABAH / EVRENSEL / GUNDEM: DTP National Chairperson Ahmet Turk, during a speech he delivered at a 2-day meeting of DTP in Diyarbakir, harshly criticized The Turkish General Staff for issuing a warning on April 27 on its internet site during a period of presidential election process. Turk branded the warning an open declaration of a military coup. Turk further said that the political parties in Turkey failed to defend the essential principles of democracy. Turk noted that Turkish society was divided into camps, namely secularist and non-secularists, and this was an outcome most desired by the statutory forces. Turk claimed that they wanted to emerge as a third force who would uphold democratic values.

¶4. HURRIYET: The daily reports claims that Ahmet Turk, National Chairperson of DTP, and Sirri Sakik, former DEP deputy and current Vice-Chairperson of DTP, paid a visit to Murat Karayilan, PKK's leader residing in the Qandil Mts. of the northern Iraq last week to discuss the election strategy of DTP. Circles close to DTP reportedly say that DTP, at the end of the ongoing 2-day meetings in Diyarbakir, is strong leaning toward fielding independent candidates. Those circles also claimed that such an outcome would be declared to Abdullah Ocalan with a visit that would be paid to him.

15. EVRENSEL / GUNDEM: Cizre Mayor Aydin Budak (from DTP) was arrested towards the end of March because of a speech he made during Newroz celebrations in Cizre on March 21 (also see press summary for April 4). The first hearing of the court was held yesterday and Budak is reportedly facing 7.5 years of prison sentence. Despite that his court-ordered release during the trial process, since Budak is standing trial on another court case that ordered his arrest, it was decided that he not be released. A crowd reportedly waited outside the court hall to extend support to Budak, and brief tension erupted when police attempted to disperse the crowd.

16. GUNDEM: A faculty member of the Divinity School at Dicle University resigned from his office to run as a candidate of DTP in Adiyaman during elections.

17. GUNDEM: The daily reports on its front page that it has been 15 days since Abdullah Ocalan was confined in a special cell as a penalty in the prison at which he was being kept. Ocalan reportedly told his attorneys that the confinement started on April 25 and would last 20 days. The penalty was given reportedly because Ocalan "had the members of the PKK trained, and, made propaganda of the terrorist organization."

ECONOMY

18. ZAMAN / BOLGE / EVRENSEL: Nearly 1000 workers at the port of Mersin, upon learning that privatization agreement would be signed on May 11 (see press summary for May 8), gathered at the port and called for active protest against the privatization of the port.

CULTURE / SOCIETY / ENVIRONMENT

19. GUNDEM: The daily claims that a female PKK member,
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who was allegedly executed by security forces as she was allegedly caught without weapons in Hatay's Hassa district on May 5 (see press summary for May 7), was buried in Mardin's Mazidagi district and the funeral was held under intense control of the police. The funeral car was stopped as it set off from Hassa, and, police checked identities of the people in the convoy that followed the funeral car. As the convoy reached Mazidagi the police stopped the convoy and temporarily seized the identity cards of the people until the end of the funeral. At the cemetery, the police reportedly took footage of the people who attended the funeral.

110. HURRIYET (CUKUROVA): A nine-year-old 3rd grade student from Mersin's private TED High School ranked third in the World Inter-School Chess Competition which was held in Greece between April 26 and May 6.
GREEN